



Field Trains and LOGPACs in an Armor Task Force

by Captain Mike Sullivan and Master Sergeant Tom Pailliotet

The commander checked his watch again. "Damn, where is the first sergeant with our logistics package (LOGPAC)? We LD in about 5 hours and we need supplies," thought the commander. Gazing around at his near-empty tanks, he wondered what could be keeping the LOGPAC. A distant explosion answered his question. "Black 6, this is Black 7, we are under fire! I say again, LOGPAC is under fire! Dismounts with RPGs just hit two fuelers. Look out! There's a BMP! We need..." Black 6 listened for an agonizing minute to the silence coming over the company net wondering what went wrong and how he could complete his mission without being resupplied.

"Logistics," the word sends cold chills down the backs of most tankers and infantrymen. "Combat service support (CSS) doesn't concern me, I'm a combat arms guy. Only CSS guys deal with that problem." How many times has this quote come back to haunt your platoon or company? How many missions have been delayed because of inadequate logistics planning? At the Combat Maneuver Training Center (CMTC), logistics challenges are faced every day by blue force (BLUFOR) units fighting in the box. To help future company commanders, first sergeant (1SGs), support platoon leaders, and platoon ser-

geants, this article addresses LOGPAC planning, security, and execution at the battalion/team level. The goal is to present usable products to prevent your next mission from being delayed because of that difficult, but vital, word — "logistics."

Although no single field manual exists that covers how to run a headquarters and headquarters company (HHC) in a mechanized or armor battalion, U.S. Army Field Manual (FM) 71-123, *Tactics and Techniques for Combined Arms Heavy Forces: Armored Brigade, Battalion Task Force, and Company Team*, Chapter 8, covers the CSS area at battalion and company levels.¹ Section II addresses the roles of the battalion CSS players. Specifically, page 20 outlines the HHC commander's role:

- Field trains officer in charge (OIC).
- Coordinates support of the task force (TF) in the battalion support area (BSA).
- Serves as liaison officer to the brigade rear command post (CP).
- Acts as battalion task force logistics problemsolver.
- Coordinates the flow of information between the combat trains CP and the field trains sections through communications with the S4.

- Directs the company team supply sergeants in the formation of LOGPACs.

- Makes decisions effecting CSS operations in the absence of the XO.

The support platoon puts together the logistics plan as outlined by the S4, and the HHC commander prompts the logistics execution. The lifeblood of the battalion, FM 71-123, describes the support platoon's role: "The support platoon has a headquarters section, a decontamination section, a transportation section, a mess section, and company Classes III and V supply squads. Although the support platoon leader works for the S4, he is under the supervision of the HHC commander in the field trains. The platoon leader is assisted by the support platoon sergeant, who is also the truck master of the transportation section."²

The support platoon serves as primary movers, getting food, fuel, ammunition, and repair parts, and transports personnel to the companies. Without this vital link in the logistics chain, company- and platoon-level CSS would cease to exist. FM 71-123 explains that, "The most efficient resupply of forward TF is accomplished by the LOGPAC, a method in which resupply elements are formed on the basis of logistics requirements of the unit. LOGPACs are organized in the field trains by



the company supply sergeant under supervision of the HHC commander and the support platoon leader.”³

When asked how a unit runs their LOGPAC, the standard answer is usually, “by SOP, of course!” Unit SOPs vary, but FM 71-123 gives good guidance on what a standard LOGPAC should consist of:

- Unit supply truck. This vehicle contains the supply class I requirements based on the ration cycle. The supply truck tows a water trailer and carries full water cans for direct exchange. In addition, the truck carries any class II supplies requested by the unit, incoming mail, and other items required by the unit. The truck may also carry replacement personnel.

- Petroleum, oils, and lubricant (POL) trucks. Bulk fuel and packaged POL products are transported by these vehicles.

- Ammunition trucks. These vehicles contain a mix of ammunition for the weapons systems of the company team. Unit SOP establishes a standard load; reports and projected demand may require changes to this standard load.⁴

Although the S4 is the task force CSS planner, experiences both as an HHC commander and an observer controller at the CMTC shows the S4 normally gets caught up in the military decisionmaking process (MDMP) and battalion orders process, prohibiting his direct involvement in battalion LOGPAC operations. A method to overcome the S4’s involvement in the MDMP is for the HHC commander and 1SG to run the battalion LOGPACs.

Hurricane 6 (HHC commander) emerged from the field trains command post (FTCP) after checking with the combat trains command post (CTCP) for any changes to the

afternoon’s LOGPAC. The S4 was still at the battalion tactical operations center (TOC) putting the finishing touches on the logistics paragraph of the battalion operations order (OPORD). The line companies called in no changes.

The support platoon leader, Atlas 6, was moving around the field trains supervising, monitoring, and talking to his soldiers as they went through their preparations for LOGPAC. Everyone knew tomorrow’s mission involved an armored advance against possible heavy enemy defenses. The tankers and infantrymen up front needed all the fuel and ammunition they could get and these soldiers were determined to get it to them.

Throughout the day, all members of the field trains comply with a set battle rhythm. Normally, LOGPAC returns late at night. Starting with the established brigade support area stand-to times, the members of HHC prepare to support the battalion:

0500: Green 2 (sensitive items report) sent to the battalion TOC.

0530-0630: Stand-to. All defensive fighting positions manned and 100 percent of personnel ready to defend.

0630: FTCP shift 1 assumed FTCP duties.

0700: Established daily priorities of work based on guidance from the commander and 1SG.

0700-0730: LOGPAC meeting.

At the LOGPAC meeting, the commander and 1SG discuss issues for the daily LOGPAC with key players. All company supply sergeants, support platoon leaders (to include section leaders), the dining facility (DFAC) platoon sergeant, senior

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maintenance sergeant, HHC XO, and other key players for LOGPAC attend. The focus of the meeting is to go over routes and logistics release point (LRP) locations, and address any problems the company supply sergeants are experiencing. Maintenance issues and materiel flow must be discussed as well. Finally, the support platoon leader reconfirms the timeline for LOGPAC with all key players, ensuring everyone knows when to line up for the LOGPAC brief.

After the LOGPAC meeting ends, each section heads back to their respective area and begins to prepare. Support platoon members conduct daily preventive maintenance checks and services (PMCS) on their vehicles with the assistance of the field trains maintenance team. The prescribed load list (PLL) clerk drops his PLL disk with the forward support battalion (FSB) and picks up parts. The parts are separated by company and placed in a central location for the company supply sergeants to pick them up. Complying with established stand-to times, support platoon members begin to prepare:

0730-1200: 100 percent PMCS of all vehicles; report deadlines to motor sergeant.

0730-1300: Support platoon and supply sergeants resupply and upload vehicles.

1200: DFAC meal breaks ready for pick up and uploaded by supply sergeants.

1300: Supply sergeants refill water trailers at FSB water point.

According to FM 71-123, the company supply sergeant is the link between battalion- and company-level logistics.⁵ The supply sergeant is the company’s representative in the battalion field trains. He assembles the standardized LOGPAC and moves it forward to the battalion LRP. The supply sergeant follows the 1SG to the company resupply point and assists in the resupply operation. He is responsible for:

- Requisitioning classes II, IV, VII, and some classes VIII and IX supply items.

- Coordinating with the support platoon leader for supply classes I, III, and V.

- Maintaining individual supply records/clothing records.

• Picking up personnel replacements at the TF field trains and preparing them for linkup with the 1SG.

• Receiving and evacuating killed in action to the graves-registration point in the BSA.

• Returning the LOGPAC, with enemy prisoners of war, damaged vehicles, and so forth, to the BSA for further disposition.⁶

Obviously, the company supply sergeant is the key player in the field trains. He coordinates within the battalion field trains with elements of the BSA to get parts, supplies, replacement personnel, and vehicles.

Hurricane 6 and 7 watched with pride as the supply sergeants finished loading their vehicles with DFAC meal breaks and then topped off the water trailers. During the last battalion field exercise, the HHC commander and 1SG fought hard to get the company supply sergeants to participate in a field trains exercise. Although the battalion was running a standard gunnery, Hurricane 6 was able to get some land for his field trains to set up and operate. After much debate between commanders, the battalion S3 ruled in favor of the HHC commander and had all company supply sergeants in the field trains. Although painful at first, the results in training had obviously paid off. Since hitting the ground, the company supply sergeants were seamlessly integrated into the field trains and maximized every minute they had to prepare to support their companies. Using a LOGPAC checklist, each company supply sergeant ensured he did not miss any of the numerous steps in preparing his company for battle.

Members of the DFAC once again had made their break times. Pallets with pre-made metal signs indicated where each company and section break was to be picked up. Supply sergeants only had to pull their 5-tons around and upload chow. The DFAC checklist ensured the right amounts of food, flatware, sugar, cups, condiments, and fresh fruit went out to the troops. Company headcounts were verified through the FTCP. Each supply sergeant went through the checklist and returned it to the DFAC platoon sergeant. Now, with his soldiers free from prepar-

ing the evening hot meal, the platoon sergeant had his soldiers continue to prepare the DFAC trucks in case of a mass casualty drill or a nuclear, biological, or chemical attack. The HHC commander designated members of the DFAC and support platoon as the battalion decontamination teams. His thought process behind this decision was two-fold: any chemical strike on the forward companies would not affect the BSA; and the number of personnel and vehicles associated with both sections gave them the greatest freedom of mobility to respond to any request for decontamination.

Prior to entering their areas of operation, the S4, battalion command sergeant major, HHC commander, support platoon leaders, and all company 1SGs met to discuss LOGPAC operations. Based on a map reconnaissance, four LRPs were established. The intent was to avoid dropping off and picking up LOGPAC at the same location. Consisting of soft-skinned vehicles with limited defensive capabilities, the support platoon sergeant and HHC 1SG knew that speed and unpredictability were their best allies. Once on the ground, company 1SGs, escorted by a section of combat vehicles, reconned the preplanned LRP sites and reported to the S4. Based on their refinements, the four LRP sites were on the battalion CSS graphics. Preparations continued:

1300-1330: Vehicle line up.

Under the guidance of the support platoon sergeant, the vehicles of the convoy were lined up based on the company or-

der established during the morning LOGPAC meeting. The order of movement was Bravo Company, Alpha Company, and then Charlie Company. HHC supply, which would resupply the unit maintenance collection point, CTCP, scouts, mortars, and the TOC, would trail. The company supply sergeants linked up with their respective support platoon teams. Each company section prepared to move with the company support section ready for LOGPAC, the company supply sergeant in his 5-ton leads, followed by two fuelers, and trailed by the ammunition cargo heavy-expanded mobility tactical truck (HEMTT).

Based on unit SOP, each company had designated markings (day and night) on the front of the supply sergeant's 5-ton. This assisted in linking up the support platoon fuelers and ammunition HEMTTs with the supply sergeants. It also helped the company 1SGs recognize their support section during link up at the LRP.

1330-1400: LOGPAC OPORD at FTCP.

Once lined up in the correct order, the support platoon leader gave his LOGPAC OPORD/briefing. Unit techniques differ, but some basic information should be given to the members of the departing LOGPAC:

- Enemy intelligence updates — from both the BSA S2 and battalion S2 sections.
- Route.
- Speeds.
- Break down plan.



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- Actions on contact.
- Actions at LRP.
- Actions on returning to LRP.
- Communications and signals (critical since most support vehicles do not have radios).

Hurricane 6 and 7 rolled by watching Atlas 6 give his brief. The two were headed out to recon the route for the LOGPAC and link up with the remaining ISGs at LRP 3. As they departed, they heard the FTCP put out over the administrative and logistics net that the LRP meeting would be conducted at LRP 3, time 1530 hours. As they departed, the HHC XO, now in charge of the field trains, gave them a salute and thumbs up from the FTCP.



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1400: LOGPAC start point.

Coordination within the BSA by both the HHC XO and support platoon leader is critical each morning. Knowing when the other battalions in the BSA plan to leave for LOGPAC will help eliminate long lines of vehicles attempting to depart at the same time. The support platoon leader leads the convoy and reports the number of vehicles and personnel to the FTCP.

Atlas 6: "Hurricane Base, this is Atlas 6, over."

Hurricane Base: "Atlas 6, Hurricane Base (FTCP)."

Atlas 6: "Roger, LOGPAC departing BSA, time now 1400. Eighteen vehicles

and forty personnel are en route to LRP 3, over."

Hurricane Base: "This is Hurricane Base, roger, out."

The support platoon leader led his convoy through the gate of the BSA and received periodic updates from Hurricane 7 regarding his route condition. Looking in his rearview mirror, he could see a gunner manning the ring mount of the Bravo Company supply 5-ton. Behind the 5-ton, he knew his support platoon cargo and fueler HEMTTs had .50-caliber machine guns and Mk-19s manned. Although a painful process in garrison, installing and training his soldiers to use the ring mounts, he now thanked heaven for the amount of

firepower his convoy could bring to bear if engaged. Sixteen of his vehicles were either equipped with ring-mounted .50-caliber machine guns or Mk-19 40-mm automatic grenade launchers.

In the rear of the convoy, the support platoon sergeant kept giving updates to the platoon leader as they cleared checkpoints and chokepoints. Communications between the two was vital since they alone controlled the route and rate of march of this massive convoy of supplies. Then Hurricane 6 called:

Hurricane 6: "Atlas 6, Hurricane 6."

Atlas 6: "Atlas 6."

Hurricane 6: "Roger. We have arrived at LRP 3. Route looks clear. Hurricane 7 is

on the ground for LRP meeting. Call us when you are 5 minutes out, over."

Atlas 6: "This is Atlas 6, will comply, over."

Hurricane 6: "Thanks. Hurricane 6 out."

"Things seem to be going well," the support platoon leader thought to himself. He sure missed the pure adrenaline rush of crashing around in his M1A1 tank, but there was something deeply satisfying about knowing that his support platoon was well trained. They had never missed a hit time or dropped a mission and they weren't about to now.

"WHAM!!!" A rocket-propelled grenade (RPG) streaked over Atlas 6's HMMWV.

Atlas 6: "Contact left, contact left!!!!" Atlas 6 caught a glimpse of movement in some trees to his left. Through blurred vision, he saw another two-man RPG team maneuver to take a shot when suddenly, BAM-BAM-BAM! Fifty-caliber rounds started pouring into the tree line. Bright explosions also started ripping through the trees as the Mk-19 high-explosive dual-purpose rounds began tearing up the ground.

The RPG team disappeared in a flash of blood, metal, sand, and trees.

The initial RPG round alerted the entire convoy. Gunners in their ring mounts scanned their respective sectors of fires. Any suspected movement brought a barrage of metal and explosives. Accelerating to get out of the kill zone, the entire convoy sped up to the speed briefed during the LOGPAC briefing. Scattered shots from nervous gunners continued to sweep the tree line.

Atlas 7: "Atlas 6, Atlas 7."

Atlas 6: "Atlas 6, go."

Atlas 7: "This is Atlas 7. We are through the ambush. No vehicles have stopped so we are good here, over."

"Thank God," Atlas 6 thought: "Roger Atlas 7. Looks like all the time at the live fire ranges paid off. Let's get to the LRP site. Atlas 6 out."

1530: 30 minutes prior to LRP, company ISGs execute LRP meeting.

About 30 minutes before the scheduled arrival of LOGPAC (1600 hours), the company ISGs arrived for the LRP meeting. Placing their M113s in a hasty defensive position, each dismounted to attend the meeting while their drivers took over the .50-cal machine gun. The battalion command sergeant major, Hurricane 6, and Hurricane 7 were discussing the upcoming mission while their drivers pulled security with M4s. Only Hurricane 7's driv-

er was still in the HMMWV, listening for the call from Atlas 6.

At the LRP meeting, Hurricane 7 discussed the location of the return LRP, the return time, and the make up of the incoming LOGPAC (order of movement). He then reminded them to collect the 5988Es, Equipment Inspection and Maintenance Worksheets, from their company crews and send them back with their company supply sergeants. The battalion command sergeant major's policy was clear: no crew made it to the company chow line without first turning in completed (dirty) 5988Es to the company maintenance team chief. Company ISGs would supervise each crew going through their maintenance sections to turn in 5988Es, refuel, then to chow. Just like the old cavalry, the horses had to be taken care of first.

"Gentlemen, just a reminder that you each have two fuelers tonight to speed up your refueling. All fuelers have a full load of packaged products (class III-P). Drop off location is at LRP 1 at 1900 hours, giving you 3 hours to complete LOGPAC. Mortar, scout, and TOC breaks will be delivered to the unit maintenance collection point. Again, send back your 5988Es tonight so we can get needed parts. The order of LOGPAC is Bravo, Alpha, Charlie, and then HHC. Look for your respective markers. Once I get the 5-minute warning, mount your M113s, line up on the road, and move out with your LOGPAC. We don't want to be sitting targets. See you at LRP 1."

Atlas 6: "Hurricane 7, this is Atlas 6, over."

Hurricane 7: "Atlas 6, this is Hurricane 7 Delta, over."

Atlas 6: "Roger Hurricane 7 Delta. We are 5 minutes out. I say again, 5 minutes out, over."

Hurricane 7: "Hurricane 7 Delta, roger."

Hurricane 7: "ISG, Atlas 6 just called. He's 5 minutes out, Top!"

With the incoming report from Atlas 6, the company ISGs remounted their M113s and pulled onto the road facing in the same direction the LOGPAC would be moving. About 3 minutes later, Atlas 6 came racing up in his HMMWV and pulled next to Hurricane 6. The distant rumble of the battalion daily resupply convoy turned into a roar. Bravo 7 saw his company's marker on the first 5-ton in the convoy and pulled out in front of it. He moved out with his company LOGPAC in tow. Each respective ISG did the same. The HHC supply convoy pulled over and let the support platoon sergeant pass. He took the lead and took the HHC sup-

ply convoy over to the unit maintenance collection point where they would deliver their respective breaks and top off the stand-by fuelers as well.

1600: LOGPAC at LRP.

Atlas 6 gave his report of the enemy dismounted ambush to Hurricane 6. He called it in to the S2 at the TOC. Hurricane 7 went with the battalion command sergeant major to the unit maintenance collection point to check on the soldiers who worked so hard to get the battalion's vehicles up for the fight. Hurricane 6 and Atlas 6 headed to the battalion TOC to get an update on the upcoming fight.

At 1830 hours, Atlas 6, Hurricane 6, and Hurricane 7 pulled into LRP 1. Atlas 7 was about 5 minutes out. Atlas 6 took charge and positioned the returning vehicles in a hasty perimeter. Gunners were in the ring mounts and drivers were dismounted, pulling security. As each ISG returned with his LOGPAC, he was integrated into the perimeter, increasing the defensive strength of the LOGPAC. Charlie Company's ISG called around 1900 hours.

1900: LOGPAC return at LRP.

Comanche 7: "Atlas 6, Comanche 7, over."

Hurricane 6: "This is Hurricane 6, he monitors over."

Comanche 7: "Roger, I am departing my assembly area time now. Running late. Going to be about 15 mikes until I return, over."

Hurricane 6: "Roger, we'll wait but you need to hurry over."

Comanche 7: "Comanche 7, will comply."

"We are becoming targets sitting here. Let me call the mortars and have them lay on AE 4008," thought Hurricane 6. Once the LRP sites were set, Hurricane 6 sat down with the battalion fire support officer and planned targets to help him defend his LRP sites. In this case, Hurricane 6 wanted the mortar tubes pre-laid with illum ready to fire in case of an attack.

Time crept by slowly and the LOGPAC waited. The tension increased with every noise as drivers, sweating under their Kevlar, scanned for any movement. Gunners scanned the area with night vision goggles looking for targets.

Small arms fire erupted from the southern side of the perimeter. Hurricane 6 immediately called for illum. In the distance, bursting illumination rounds shortly followed the sound of mortar firing. Sup-

port platoon soldiers saw a four-man enemy team moving around the perimeter of the vehicles. Squad leaders fired their M203 rounds with modified parachute flares to mark enemy positions. Fifty-caliber machine guns, Mk-19s, and M4s all engaged at once, bringing enemy soldiers down quickly. As the mortar illumination drifted to earth, casting eerie shadows over the area, the firing stopped and soldiers continued to look for targets.

Hurricane 6: "Assassin 6, this is Hurricane 6, over."

Assassin 6: "Assassin 6."

Hurricane 6: "Roger, I've got contact vicinity LRP 1 with enemy dismounts. Could you give me hand so I can pull my LOGPAC out, over?"

Assassin 6: "This is Assassin 6, roger. I'll send Assassin 7 back with a tank section to cover your withdraw, over."

Hurricane 6: "Thanks Assassin 6. Break. Hammer 7, Hurricane 6. Repeat illum mission on AE 4008, over."

Hammer Base: "This is Hammer Base, roger out."

Mortar rounds continued to illuminate the area. In the distance, the sound of heavy tracked vehicles approached. Assassin 7 arrived with a tank section. Quickly, the M1A1s used their thermal sights to scan the wood line.

Assassin White 8: "Hurricane 6, this is Assassin White 8, your push, over."

Hurricane 6: "Assassin White 8, Hurricane 6."

Assassin White 8: "Roger Hurricane 6. We have negative contact in the surrounding wood line. We'll continue to scan while you pull out, over."

Hurricane 6: "Assassin White 8, Hurricane 6, thanks. Out."

Comanche 7 arrived with the last part of the LOGPAC. Rapidly, Atlas 6 got everyone remounted and departed toward the BSA.

Atlas 7: "Hurricane 6, this is Atlas 7; we are clear of LRP 1, en route back to Hurricane Base, over."

Hurricane 6: "This is Hurricane 6, roger. Break. Assassin 7, we are clear of LRP 1. Thanks for the assist. Hammer Base, good shooting with the illum rounds. This is Hurricane 6, out."

2200: LOGPAC arrives back at BSA.

The convoy back to the BSA was long and tiring, but uneventful. Once in the perimeter of the BSA, the long night was not yet complete. Supply sergeants headed toward the trash point to empty 5 tons

of respective company trash. The logistics status reports collected by the company supply sergeants were consolidated at the FTCP then forwarded to the FSB. The 5988Es went to the maintenance section and were entered into the unit level logistics system. The LOGPAC checklists were completed by each supply sergeant and turned into the FTCP. Atlas 6 called ahead to the FSB fuel platoon to push back his bulk refueling times. Around 2230 hours, his fuelers inched up near the large FSB fuelers to replenish near-empty tanks. By the time all vehicles were back in their camouflaged positions, it was nearly midnight.

Hurricane 6 and 7 stood in the darkness near the FTCP, watching ground guides put the vehicles back for the night. The battalion was at 100 percent on supplies and ready for attack. The night FTCP shift was ready to monitor the battle. Knowing another busy day would start in a mere 5 hours, only the night shift and perimeter security remained awake.

Hopefully, future company commanders, 1SGs, support platoon leaders, and platoon sergeants will find this article useful. See you on the high ground!

Editor's note: The authors included helpful checklists with this article. Due to space constraints, *ARMOR* cannot print these checklists, but agrees that they may be of great help "in improving unit logistics battles." Please visit our website at www.knox.army.mil/armormag/downloads2.htm to download these checklists.



Notes

¹U.S. Army Field Manual, 71-123, *Tactics and Techniques for Combined Arms Heavy Forces: Armored Brigade, Battalion Task Force, and Company Team*, U.S. Government Printing Office, Washington, D.C., 30 September 1992, Chapter 8, Section II, p. 20.

²Ibid., p. 22.

³Ibid, p. 28.

⁴Ibid.

⁵Ibid.

⁶Ibid, p. 52.

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